

COMMITTEE ON DOG MANAGEMENT IN SAN MATEO COUNTY PARKS

Mission: To provide healthy spaces for humans and canines, to promote positive experiences for dogs and other park users and to protect natural resources in San Mateo County Parks

Meeting Notes

January 23, 2017

Building 455 County Center, Redwood City
4th Floor, Room 402

Members Present: Neil Merrilees, Darrick Emil, Chris Johnson, Jim Sullivan, Faye Brophy, Jerry Hearn, Christine Corwin

Excused: Nic Erridge

Staff: Sarah Birkeland, Carla Schoof, Brenda Bennett

Guests: Michael Newburn and Dania Stoneham

The meeting began at 2:30 PM with a welcome by Chairman Neil Merrilees. Neil asked everyone present to introduce themselves and then turned the meeting over to Pat Brown, facilitator

Process Review

Pat briefly reviewed the following information with the Committee:

- Reminder that all Committee documents are posted on Parks Department website
- Group agreements
 - Members prepare for meetings by reading meeting packet
 - Speak respectfully during meetings
 - Listen for understanding
 - Allow the facilitator to guide the process
- Reminder about consensus decision making (voting back up)

The notes from the December 19th meeting were unanimously approved on a motion by Jim Sullivan and a second by Chris Johnson.

Public Comment: There were no members of the public present at this meeting.

Chair and Member Reports

- Members reported on their experiences talking with community members about the Committee's work and receiving a variety of comments and feedback.
- There was a suggestion that a map of County parks and parks in other jurisdictions be made available to help members explain the areas that would be impacted by a County policy.
- Members noted that GGRNA has put a hold on implementing its newly developed dog policies.
- Neil, after traveling in Spain, reported that he noted very convenient dog waste disposal approaches in that country.

- The Half Moon Bay Review published an article about the Dog Management Committee after the presentation to the Mid-Coast Community Council.

Input from Alternates Attending the Meeting

There were no alternates in attendance at this meeting.

Panel Presentation/Committee Discussion

Tales from the Field – Panel presentation about dog management policies and practices in other jurisdictions:

Sarah welcomed members of the panel:

- Michael Newburn, Visitor Services Manager, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
- Dania Stoneham, Unit Manager, East Bay Regional Parks

She posed guiding questions to elicit information about the current policies in place in both areas, including benefits and challenges.

Dania: Dogs are allowed off leash in undeveloped areas and leashes are required in more developed areas. The ordinance guiding determining areas is reviewed every two years with consideration of resource protection and other issues. In most cases dogs are required to be on leash for the first 200 yards of the trail (even if off leash is allowed) to ensure controlled progress as animals are brought into the park area. No more than three dogs can be walked by one person. If there are more (such as with professional dog walkers, a permit is required.)

Michael: Midpeninsula offers open space and preservation. All uses are allowed within the open space but not all in the same spaces. For instance there may be an off leash area, an area restricted to walkers/hikers, an area for bike riding, etc. The District determines these specific areas using the following criteria:

| | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. History of dog use 2. Dogs allowed on connecting trails 3. Usage rates 4. Miles of trails 5. Parking 6. Visibility | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Conflicting special uses 8. Habitat sensitivity 9. How close to urban areas 10. Staff rating 11. |
|--|---|

One area, Pulgas Ridge, was identified as very appropriate for off leash dog use, since it was a denuded area surrounded by a paved road.

MROSD also restricts the number of dogs per person to three.

When asked about enforcement challenges, Dania noted they have found it very difficult to cut back on allowable uses, even when conditions have changed. In the East Bay Parks, Park District Police are responsible for enforcement and rangers for education. They have found that targeted enforcement, accompanied by an educational effort, works well. There is usually a small core

population that might resist, but most people are reasonable once they understand the need for restrictions and the natural consequences if rules are not followed.

Both presenters agreed that dog waste is a big issue. Both require dog walkers to pick up waste and properly dispose of it. Most people will comply with the pick up, but many are reluctant to carry waste into their cars and away from the parks. Michael and Dania agreed that making it easy for people to follow the rules, by providing waste disposal opportunities, is a good idea.

Both also agreed that having the public participate in the development of decisions relating to park usage is critical. Community input and participation leads to better regulations and provides elected decision makers with confidence in a fair and equitable process used to develop guidelines and regulations.

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District uses volunteers to help with educating the public about the reasons for regulations.

Follow-up from December Meeting - Community Outreach

Carla presented the following proposal for community workshops. She noted that the choice of locations was guided by the number of dog licenses in various areas of the County. These initial community meeting will have the following purposes: make the community aware of the Dog Management Committee’s work and timeline, introduce Committee members, learn how the Committee is approaching its work and how to communicate with the committee. At these meetings community members will have the opportunity to tell the Committee about the issues that should be considered as the policy recommendations are being developed.

The community will also be told that they will have a chance to comment on the draft recommendations that have been developed before they are submitted to the Parks Commission.

Community meetings are proposed for the following dates and locations:

| Date and Time | Location |
|---------------------------|---|
| February 15, 7:00-8:30 PM | South San Francisco City Hall 33 Arroyo St, South San Francisco |
| February 22, 7:00-8:30 PM | San Pedro Valley Park 600 Oddstad Blvd., Pacifica |
| February 23, 7:00-8:30 PM | Twin Pines Community and Senior Center, Belmont 20 Twin Pines Lane, Belmont |

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Role of committee members at community workshops

Carla suggested that at least three members of the Committee should attend each of the meetings. Their role at the meetings would be the following:

- Welcome the community and explain the membership of the Committee
- Share committee’s approach to working together
- Encourage active public engagement in the process

Finally, Carla presented the following plan for publicizing the meetings:

- Parks website: Front page, committee page, activity calendar
- Flyers: Parks, meeting locations,
- Park and Recreation Commission meeting: Feb. 2
- Park kiosks
- Park partners, Peninsula Human Society, Libraries
- Social media:
 - Facebook pages: Park and Foundations, County, (City)
 - Nextdoor: Countywide & city, area specific
 - Twitter (Parks, Foundation, County, City)

Acting Director’s Report

Sarah Birkeland distributed copies of existing dog-related policy and regulations in preparation for the next phase of the Committee’s work - developing recommendations.

Current Policy and Regulations related to Dogs in San Mateo County Parks as of 1/23/16

3.68.080 General Protective Regulations - Parks

- (i) Domestic Animals. No dogs, cats, fowl or other domesticated animals shall be permitted to enter or go at large in any County Park or Recreation area, either with or without a keeper. Nothing in this section shall prohibit a guide dog under the control of a person with a vision or hearing impairment or “police dog” under the control of a peace officer from entering a County Park or Recreation area. No person shall release any captured wild animal within any County Park or Recreation area except authorized public officials pursuant to their duties.
- (j) Abandoned Animals. No person shall abandon a dog, cat, fowl or other animal within any County Park or Recreation area, or in the San Francisco Fish and Game Refuge.
- (k) Feeding Domesticated Animals. No person shall feed any abandoned domesticated animal in any County Park or Recreation area, or in the San Francisco Fish and Game Refuge.

3,68,180-Dogs on Sheep Camp Trail.

- (a) Dogs shall be permitted on the portion of Sheep Camp Trail located between Canada Road and Highway 280 subject to the conditions and requirements of this section.
- (b) No person shall cause or allow any dog under his or her ownership, possession or control to enter or remain on Sheep Camp Trail unless the dog is licensed as provided in section 6.04.040(a), is wearing around its neck a collar and valid license tag and the owner or possessor of the dog complies with all other conditions of this section 3.68.180.
- (c) No person shall cause or allow any dog under his or her ownership, possession or control to enter Sheep Camp Trail unless such person restrains such dog with a leash not to exceed six (6) feet in length and insure that the leash and control by the person are sufficient to prevent endangering other persons or animals.
- (d) No person shall cause or allow any dog under his or her ownership, possession or control to enter or remain on or to defecate upon any part of Sheep Camp Trail (including but not limited to the San Francisco Watershed, Canada Road and any state right-of-way) used by the general

public unless the owner or person with control or custody of the dog immediately removes the feces and properly disposes of it in an sanitary manner.

- (e) No person shall walk a dog on Sheep Camp Trail or allow or cause a dog under his or her ownership, possession or control to enter Sheep Camp Trail without carrying at all times a suitable container or other suitable instrument for the removal and disposal of canine feces.

(Prior code 3387.5: Ord. 3370, 02/11/92: to be in effect for one year)

6.04.070 – Prohibited conduct (County wide)

No owner or possessor of any animal shall cause or permit it to do any of the following:

- (a) To be upon any public street, sidewalk, park, school ground, any public property, or upon any unenclosed premises in this jurisdiction unless the animal is properly licensed, if such licensing is necessary hereunder, and under the control of the owner by being saddled, harnessed, haltered, or leashed by a substantial chain, lead rope, or leash, which chain, lead rope or leash shall be continuously held by some competent person capable of controlling such animal.
- (b) To trespass upon any private property without the consent of the owner thereof, and to knowingly permit the animal to remain upon the property or to habitually continue to trespass thereon.
- (c) To suffer or permit such animal to habitually bark or meow or act in such a manner as to continuously disturb the peace of any citizen or to be a public nuisance.
- (d) To be without proper and adequate food, water, shelter, care, and attention as described in section 597(f) of the Penal Code.
- (e) Subsection (a) of this section shall not be applicable to cats.

(Prior code 3330.5; Ord. 966, 10/23/51; Ord. 2551, 12/12/78; Ord. 2758, 12/01/81; Ord. 2850, 07/19/83; Ord. 3123, 09/15/87)

Summary

At this meeting, the Committee wrapped up the research phase of its work and continued planning for community engagement as the process continues.

Committee members welcomed Sarah to her new role and recognized each other for commitment to the work of the committee and ability to maintain an inclusive and positive working culture.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Next meeting: Monday, February 27, 2017, 2:30-4:00 PM